



ANU

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

DRUMatiX

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"My goal has always been to liberate sound and open up music to the whole world of sounds," Edgard Varèse (1883-1965)

Saturday June 11 2005 730 pm
ANU School of Music
Llewellyn Hall

PROGRAM

Music for Pieces of Wood (1971)

Steve Reich

Veronica Walshaw, Michael Stevens, Charles Martin, Ben Willson, Richard Spong

Rain Tree (1981)

Toru Takemitsu

Jessica Dai, vibraphone - crotales, Wyana Etherington, Gary France, marimba - crotales

A Room (1943), for piano

John Cage

Edwina Berry, piano

She is Asleep (1943) quartet for twelve tom-toms

John Cage

Charles Martin, Adam Dickson, Richard Spong, Michael Stevens - Chinese tom-toms

A Room (1943), for prepared piano

John Cage

Edwina Berry, piano

Ionisation (1933)

Edgard Varèse

Chi-Hsia Lai, Jessica Dai, Ben Willson, Adam Jeffrey, Adam Dickson, Veronica Walshaw, Michael Stevens, Charles Martin, Richard Spong, Tim Hansen, Wyana Etherington, Hannah Vermeesch

INTERVAL

Continuum (1967)

Kazimierz Serocki

Adam Jeffrey, Veronica Walshaw, Ben Willson, Adam Dickson, Jessica Dai, Wyana Etherington

The Invisible Men (1996)

Nigel Westlake

Wyana Etherington, Adam Jeffrey, Adam Dickson, Gary France

MUSIC FOR PIECES OF WOOD

Minimalism in music has received increased attention since its introduction to music in the late 1960s by composers such as Reich and Riley. Its style has provided a fresh compositional alternative to atonality and serialism in the twentieth century. Steve Reich's "Music for Pieces of Wood" received its premiere performance in 1973. I first performed Music for Pieces of Wood in 1979 with the Abraxas Percussion Group for the Music Educators National Conference in Atlantic City USA under the supervision of the composer. Music for Pieces of Wood requires African Claves specially tuned to D#, B, A, C#, D# 8va. As these instruments are not available commercially I commissioned Chris Murdock, West Australian instrument maker and artist, better known for his audio work at the W.A. Academy of Performing Arts, to reproduce the instruments specified by Reich.

Gary France

RAIN TREE

Takemitsu's Rain-Tree for three percussionists was completed in 1981. It forms one part of his Waterscape series of works for different ensembles all on water related topics. This piece is dedicated to the writer Kenzaburo Oé and the celebrated percussion virtuoso Sylvio Gualda.

"The tree is called the rain-tree, because its lush foliage still sprinkles the previous night's drops of rain onto the ground in the following afternoon. Its hundreds of thousands of tiny leaves - finger-like - store up moisture, though other trees dry out in an instant. A clever tree, you must admit."

quoted from "Atama no ii, Ame no Ki" a novel by Kenzaburo Oé

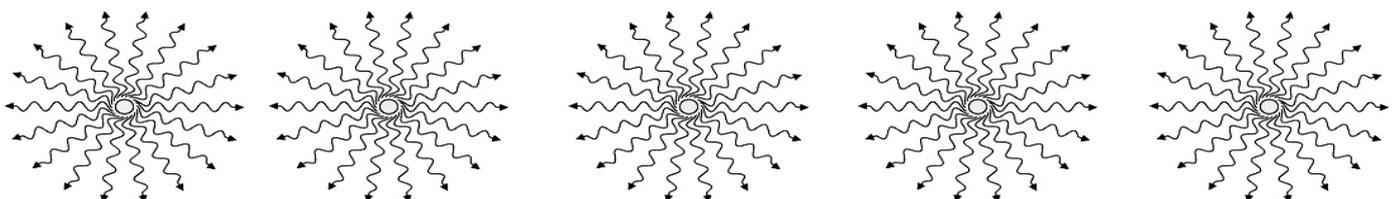
First performance was played by Sumiere Yoshihara, Yasunori Yamaguchi and Atsushi Sugawara on May 31st, 1981 at the Seibu theatre.

Toru Takemitsu

A ROOM / SHE IS ASLEEP, QUARTET FOR TWELVE TOM-TOMS

This evening we hear a suite of compositions by John Cage from 1943. A ROOM, for solo and prepared pianos "book ends" our percussion quartet She is Asleep for twelve tom-toms. In this quartet, each player performs on three Chinese tom-toms striking either the edge or centre of each drum thus producing six separate sounds. The musical palette is also expanded towards the end with the introduction of soft timpani mallets and a wire brush. She is Asleep combines sections of high rhythmic complexity with sublime statements of motivic unity thus allowing chaos to dissolve into joyful synergy. In contrast to She is Asleep, A ROOM for solo piano is being performed twice. First we will hear this simple tapestry of overlapping rhythms utilizing the same few notes on a traditional grand piano. By subtly shifting the layered motives Cage produced a minimalist effect some twenty years prior to the birth of minimalism. Later we again will hear this same short composition played on piano, but a piano of a different sort! The prepared piano this evening has been "doctored up" with a fascinating array of bolts, pieces of weather stripping, a penny and pieces of rubber stuck between the strings. Cage's fascination with timbre comes alive through this performance. Our pianist will perform exactly the same music as before but certain notes will have an altogether different sound. IS SHE REALLY ASLEEP?

Gary France



IONISATION

Ionization, Varèse's best known work, established its eminence in twentieth-century music as being the first western work written solely for percussion. Ionization's traditional form consists of four distinct sections and a coda. Each section contains a wealth of innovative ideas and sounds.

As Varèse stated: "Don't call me a composer, call me an engineer of rhythms, resonances, and timbres."

Ionization was begun in 1929 and completed on November 13, 1931. The first performance was on March 6, 1933 with Nicolas Slonimsky conducting. The following is a description of the world premiere by Slonimsky himself.

"Ionization, epoch-making work by Edgar Varèse, scored for instruments of percussion, friction and sibilation, all of indeterminate pitch (kettledrums being excluded), completed by him on 13 November 1931 in Paris and portraying in a recognizably classical sonata form the process of atomic change as electrons are liberated and molecules are ionized, the main subject suggesting a cosmic-ray bombardment introduced by an extra-terrestrial rhythmic figure on the tambour militaire while two sirens slide in contrary motion over the whole spectrum of audible frequencies, much in the manner of harp glissando, the second subject, of an ominously lyrical nature, reflecting in palpitating rhythms the asymmetrical interference pattern of heterodyne frequencies, the development section being marked by the appearance of heavy nuclear particles in the metal group (anvils, gongs, tam tams), as contrasted with the penetrating but light wood-and-membrane sonorities of the exposition, and after an artfully abridged recapitulation arriving at a magistral coda, with tubular chimes ringing as new atomic polymers are created and the residual thermal energy of vigorous tone-clusters on the piano keyboard serving as a cadential ostinato, is performed for the first time anywhere at a concert of the Pan American Association of Composers in New York, with Nicolas Slonimsky (to whom the score of ionization was eventually dedicated) conducting an ensemble of fourteen professional composers and innate rhythmicians manning 41 multifarious instruments, among them Carlos Salzedo playing the Chinese blocks. Henry Cowell pounding the tone-clusters on the piano, Paul Creston striking the gongs and William Schuman pulling the cord of the lion's roar. [1]"

Gary France

THE INVISIBLE MEN

A silent movie with music for percussion quartet by Nigel Westlake.

From as early as 1902 Australian musicians used film as part of their stage performances. Among these were the Corricks, a family of talented musicians, who recognized the potential of film to add an extra dimension to their work.

The Corricks began touring in 1901 & traveled extensively throughout Australasia, England & South East Asia for 13 years. The family (eight women & two men) used projected lantern slides & film to provide background scenes for their musical performances.

A typical Corrick program was a mixture of vocal & instrumental musical recitals that opened & closed with film. The program lasted about 50 minutes, & featured a mix of film genres: comedies, trick films, travel or scenic footage (known as "actuality") & occasionally, melodramas.

By the time they retired from touring in 1914, the family held over 100 film titles, including an outstanding example of early trick photography, "The Invisible Men".

Produced in France in 1907 by Pathe Freres, "The Invisible Men" is about a wizard and his partner who create a potion that makes them invisible. After they leave, two other men break in and take the mixture and use it to steal clothes and food. They are pursued by the law, but the wizard and his partner are arrested by mistake. The wizard turns the judge and court officials into giant walking vegetables.

The percussion score for "The Invisible Men" was commissioned by Synergy Percussion in 1996 with generous financial assistance from The University of Technology, Sydney.

Thanks to the Screensound Australia for generously providing the film for this evenings performance.

Nigel Westlake

[1] Slonimsky, Nicolas, Music Since 1900, Schirmer Books, NY, p 355

CONTINUUM

Kazimierz Serocki (1922-81), is one of the most important composers of the Polish post-war avant-garde, though his music is rarely performed today. He started out as a boxer before studying composition with Kazimierz Sikorski and piano with Stanisław Szpilowski at the State Higher School of Music in Białystok graduating in 1946. He continued his studies in composition with Nadia Boulanger and in piano with Lazare Levy in Paris in 1947-48. From 1946 to 1951 he performed many times as a concert pianist in Poland and abroad, however from 1952 onwards he was exclusively committed to composing. In his early days as a composer he experienced the harsh pressures to which culture was subjected by the state, but later he belonged to the group of Polish composers (including Lutoslawski and Penderecki) who broke free from this conservative influence in the mid-1950's.

Continuum (1966), is scored for six percussionists placed surrounding the audience. Though the work carries no explanatory note, it is an exploration in spatial sound and an experiment in the nuances of percussive timbres that were so prominent amongst the avant-garde of the 1960's. However, Continuum differs from that of the electronic experiments from such composers as Stockhausen and Babbitt in the sense that it is purely acoustic stereophony, rather than electronic. As a matter of fact, in the vernacular of today, one might think of this evening's performance as true "6.1 surround sound". The work requires a vast array of instruments, including 3 vibraphones, 2 xylophones, marimba, 4 timpani, 13 crotales, 9 Thai gongs, 6 tam-tams, 3 bass drums, 9 tom-toms, 12 cymbals and an assortment of bells, bottles, blocks and various other paraphernalia that is spread amongst the six musicians.

Continuum was premiered by Les Percussions des Strasbourg on September 17, 1967, as part of the Stockholm Festival.

Adam Jeffrey

Biographies

Edwina Berry

Edwina Berry was born in Bathurst in 1985 and started studying piano at the age of 8. In 2003 she moved to Canberra to begin a piano performance degree at the School of Music where she is currently completing her third year with keyboard lecturer Susanne Powell. Last year Edwina performed in Steve Reich's 'Music for 18 Musicians' as well as appearing in the Orchestral Encounters concerts under conductors Jean-Louis Forestier and Tom Wood.

Gary France

Gary is a native of Syracuse, New York, U.S.A. Mr. France, now living in Canberra, Australia, performs in a wide range of musical genres. He received his Bachelor of Music degree, Music Education, in 1979, from the State University of New York at Potsdam and his Master of Music degree, Orchestral Performance / Jazz, in 1988 at the University of North Texas. While at UNT Gary became the first percussionist to direct one of the prestigious Jazz Lab Bands. Since settling in Australia in 1987, as the inaugural lecturer in Percussion at the W.A. Conservatorium of Music, Gary France has done much, through his dedicated teaching and performing on a wide range of percussion instruments, to significantly raise the profile of percussion playing in Australia. He is regularly employed by peak music bodies such as the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian National Academy of Music to tutor developing percussionists. His former students now hold prominent positions in the music industry both here in Australia and abroad. Since 1998 Gary France has coordinated and nurtured the percussion program at the School of Music, Australian National University. Mr. France also served as Head of School of Music in 2004 during this time he co-convened the inaugural Australian Music Educators National Conference.

Mr France has performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Nova Ensemble, the West Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestras, the Dallas Brass, the Doddworth Saxhorn Ensemble, The Australian Chamber Orchestra and was principal timpanist / percussionist of the Canberra Symphony with whom he performed William Kraft's "Concerto for Timpani and Orchestra" in 2001. Gary's list of recent world premiers includes works by Larry Sitsky, Ross Edwards, Nigel Westlake, Roger Smalley, Peter Sculthorpe, Robert Cucinotta, Edward Applebaum and Robert Casteels. As a jazz drummer Gary's list of other musical credits include: James Morrison, Richie Cole, Ricky May, George Golla, Nat Adderley, Dale Barlow, Jim McNeeley, Urbie Green, Charlie Gabriel, John Clayton, Emily Remler, Peter Leutch, Phil Wilson, Clifford Jordan and numerous others. Gary is also well known as the founder and artistic director of the 18-piece Perth Jazz Orchestra as well as drummer with the nationally acclaimed western swing group Dude Ranch featuring Lucky Oceans.

As a clinician for Yamaha Musical Products the Sabian Cymbal Company, and Innovative Percussion Products he has toured internationally throughout the U.S., China, Australia, and New Zealand. His own personal research in world musics has led him to India, Africa, and South East Asia. These direct field studies support Gary in his role as director of the ANU World Music Ensemble "DRUMatix". Under Gary's direction, the ANU percussion program hosted the first Australian National Percussion Symposium in October 2003.

We would like to thank and acknowledge

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Nette, Age 5

Make a Beautiful Sound!